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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents and educators, this monograph briefly describes the relationship between the language processes of reading and writing and suggests some ways language development can be encouraged in young children. The monograph begins by recognizing that writing is a process consisting of prewriting, writing, and rewriting, and urges parents and teachers to provide children with opportunities to discuss and reflect on their ideas and thoughts before they actually begin to write. Next, the monograph explains that getting children to use their language experiences enables them to see their own language in written form, and it emphasizes that successful reading and writing experiences are the keys to progress. The monograph concludes with suggestions for activities at home and at school that interrelate reading and writing. (HOD)

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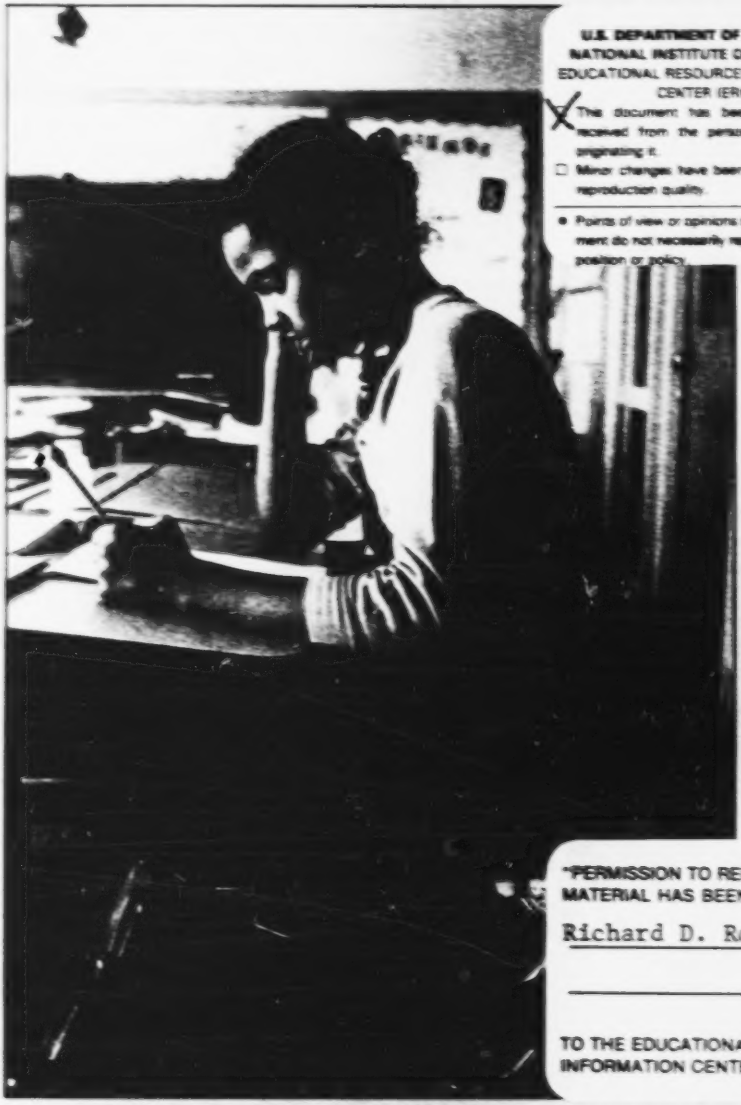

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Reading & writing in the school and home

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Writing and reading:

Recently, teachers and educational researchers have been paying more attention to the meaningful interrelationships among the various language forms. Once instructors divided language into its component parts of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Now, educators know that these distinctions served no useful purpose. For many children, this classification probably hindered rather than simplified the learning process.

Previously, some educators had also classified listening and reading as receptive or passive activities, and talking and writing as productive or active functions (Emig: 1977, p. 123). This distinction was unfortunate because it implied that listening and reading are passive in nature, and thus, require no active participation on the part of the individual. "It ignores the creative aspects of listening and reading as mental constructive acts" (Wilson, p. 896). Much of the recent research on reading and writing has emphasized the active participation of the language learner (DeFord, 1980; Graves, 1978; Smith, 1978, 1982).

This monograph briefly describes the relationship between the language processes of reading and writing and suggests some ways both parents and educators can encourage language development. Children want to be successful readers and writers. Our responsibility is to give them opportunities to achieve success in these areas. Both at home and at school, children need readers and writers as role models. They should hear their teachers read aloud for work

A natural connection

Children want to be successful readers and writers.

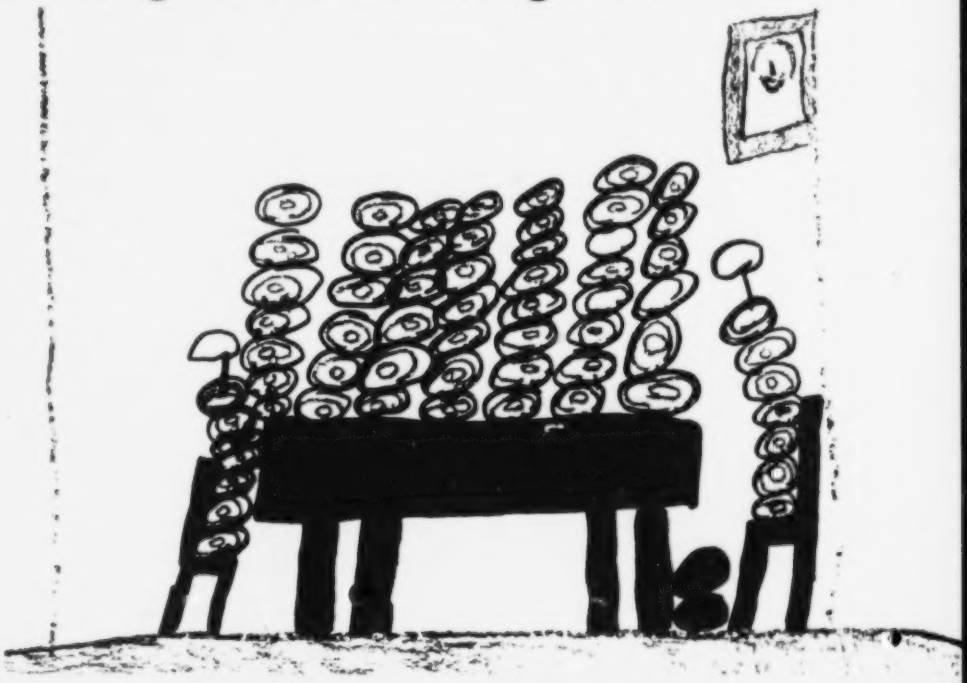
From an early age,

and pleasure, in different settings, for different purposes. Also, students should have the opportunity to see their teachers write stories, letters, memos, and journals. At home, children should hear their parents read aloud and see them reading books, magazines, newspapers, and journals. Also, parents can provide incentive for their children to write if they will take time to write with them.

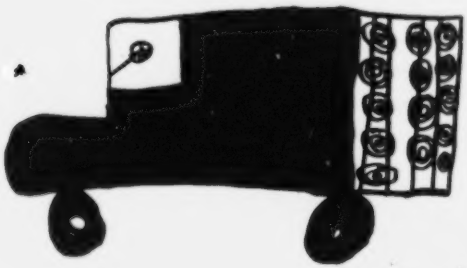
Research shows that children begin writing before they begin reading. Adults describe children's writing, usually at age 2 or 3, as scribbling. Yet, if adults ask these children what they are doing, they probably answer, "writing." In fact, children are so confident about their writing that they often ask a parent or friend to read it back to them. Graves (1981) notes that even very young children can write with some degree of meaning. From an early age, writing is a meaningful, purposeful experience. Parents and educators should be aware of this natural development and encourage its growth.

Writing is a process consisting of prewriting, writing, and rewriting (Smith, 1982). Prewriting is the development of ideas and thoughts. Sometimes, the writer spends a long time describing, exploring, explaining, and discussing. This critical prewriting stage

writing is meaningful.



The dishes are everywere



The rain is washing the Dishes.

There may be many starts

is often overlooked by parents and teachers when they plan writing activities for children.

An atmosphere of freedom encourages prewriting. Children need to move around the room, sharpen pencils, pace the floor, and look out the window while they are thinking. As adults, we know this is a necessary part of the writing process. But teachers and parents become impatient when children don't begin writing immediately after the school writing assignment or the request to write a letter to grandmother has been given.

Rather than showing impatience, parents and teachers should give children opportunities to discuss and reflect on their ideas and thoughts before they actually begin to write.

The discussion and reflection, which begin with the prewriting activities, extend into the writing and rewriting stages. Once writing begins, there may be many false starts and new beginnings. Writing always changes; it's a natural bridge between the planning and the rewriting experiences. So, initial writing is only a preliminary step on the way to the rewriting stage.

Sometimes, parents and teachers forget that rewriting is a

and new beginnings.

Writing always changes; it's a natural bridge between the planning and rewriting experiences.

Children can dictate

major part of writing, and if they remember it at all, it is in a negative context. Children need to know that rewriting is an integral part of the writing process. At this stage, writers reconsider and respond to what they have written. It is not doing over again writing that is wrong but a reconsideration of what has been written. Smith (1981) describes rewriting as the ". . . writer's own response to what has been written. . ." (p. 127). During the rewriting stage, writers become readers. Often parents and teachers evaluate the finished product rather than the writing process. However, at this stage, the message or the content is more important than spelling and legibility of handwriting. Mistakes can be handled in the final writing stage.

etting children to use the language experience encourages them to write and read in the prewriting, writing, and rewriting process. A good way to do this is by giving children opportunities to create and dictate stories to adults. This language experience enables children to see their own language in written form. To read, children must understand the author's message. With this language experience, understanding is guaranteed because the child's own words have been dictated to an adult and written on the chalkboard. Stories can be about a pet, plans for a

stories to adults.

A language experience enables children to see their **own** language in written form.

You can write lots of

party, or a summary of a cooking activity performed either at home or at school. The activity works well with one child or with a group.

Wordless or textless books are also useful for helping children of all ages become fluent readers and writers. The detailed illustrations give students many ideas for writing. Books such as *The Silver Pony* by Lynn Ward provide opportunities for successful writing and reading experiences, because writers become the readers of their own books. One 8-year old boy, who at first said a wordless book was for babies, later said, "Hey, this is neat! You can write lots of different stories about one book."

Teachers can observe reading and writing progress by keeping folders of children's writing. Beginning writers use inventive or functional spelling. As they have more reading and writing experiences, they use standard spellings. The keys to progress are successful reading and writing experiences. If children have few opportunities to read and write, they will have difficulty becoming readers and writers.

stories about one book.

The keys to progress are successful reading and writing experiences.

Suggested activities

The following suggestions combine reading and writing experiences. They are designed for parents and teachers. As Wilson (1981) noted, the relationship between reading and writing is "a powerful impetus for providing interrelated activities. . ." (p. 900). Although these activities may seem appropriate only for a specific age, they can easily be adapted to fit the needs of all children, often with few changes.

Before beginning, consider the following materials for use with your various reading and writing projects:

- crayons, pencils, magic markers
- computer paper for first drafts of writing
- lined, unlined, and construction paper
- discontinued wallpaper sample books (for making book covers)
- yarn (to lace computer paper together to make books and journals)
- old manual typewriter
- library books, reference books, and old basal materials
- newspapers and magazines

In school one idea is to write directions on how to complete a variety of activities such as:

— Cleaning and organizing the classroom for various functions; for example, reading class, parties, or visitors' day.
— Procedures to be followed during a fire drill.
— Rules to obey when the class is at lunch, in an assembly, or on the playground.
— Acceptable behavior when the teacher leaves the classroom.
— How to act when there is a substitute teacher.

At home, some reasons for writing are:

— Plans for holidays.
— Plans for weekend activities.
— A schedule for television viewing.
— Letters to relatives including invitations for parties and special events, or thank you notes.
— Letters to mail order houses and other companies that request product information.

At home, they also can write rules for:

— Conduct required of a sibling when entering the child's room.
— Borrowing toys, books, and other personal items.
— Sharing household chores with siblings.
— Cooking and using kitchen equipment.

Set aside a time each day for personal writing. This can include developing the habit of adding to a journal on a daily basis, writing notes to fellow classmates or the teacher, or creating stories or poems.

A classroom idea is to take pictures of various class activities, locations, or individuals and have the students write captions for them.

In the classroom, have a wide variety of wordless books available to stimulate writing on various aspects of the stories. Whether they write a complete text for a book or react to an individual page, wordless books are excellent opportunities for combining reading and writing. Encourage students, either as individuals or groups, to write their own books. Teachers need not always select the topic, but can encourage students to use the entire range of their experiences and interests. They can write books for fun and enjoyment as well as to inform about a specific topic. Books also can be directed to a specific audience. For example, students can write a book for younger children about a future school assembly program.

Once students complete these books, teachers can send them home with the authors to share with their families. These books are also a good addition to classroom or school libraries for other children to read.

Topics for student-created books

animals	television	desk
home	favorite food	library
school secretary	swimming	favorite books
school custodian	neighbors	principal
cars	friends	principal's office
airplanes	best friend	birthdays
airport	trips	rainy days
trains	museum	snowy days
trucks	post office	hot days
school cook	school bus	cold days
weekend	bus driver	New Year's Day
classroom art corner	Thanksgiving	Valentine's Day
rivers	the President	other countries
oceans	winter	comic books
mountains	playground	magazines
caves		mystery

(Annen, 1979)

Another idea is to encourage students to write about the books they have read.

- Write a letter to a friend recommending the book.
- Write a telegram describing the book in 20 words or less.
- Write a poem about the book, a character, or the scenery.
- Write a different ending to the book.
- Write a television or radio commercial advertising the book.
- Write how you think authors show biased or unbiased opinions.
- Write a letter to the author of a book.
- Describe a new character for the book, and tell how the story would be different with the new character.
- Write what you learned from reading the book.
- Make an invitation to read the book.
- Write a play about a part of the book.
- Write about the author of the book.
- Write autobiographies of the principal characters.

Teachers who integrate reading and writing through activities such as these will find their students using language in more meaningful ways. Students will see the forms of language not just as something that must be learned in school but rather as important in their daily lives.

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Richard D. Robinson, professor of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia, has a dual appointment in the departments of continuing professional education and curriculum and instruction.

He received his doctorate in reading education from the University of Georgia in 1971. Presently, he is working with school districts throughout Missouri on evaluation and implementation of reading programs.

Joycelin Hulett is an Elementary Language Arts Consultant for Columbia Public Schools. She taught in elementary school for 12 years. She is presently working on a doctorate in reading at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Afterword

Specialization is not always an unmixed blessing. This is especially so when it leads to building compartments for purposes of study and/or emphasis and not also providing for the linkage necessary to translate back to the whole. By definition, the Universe is unitary; it is not a duo-verse nor a multi-verse. However, since the universe is made up of so many components as to be very difficult to deal with all simultaneously, it becomes necessary to "break off" a piece at a time to focus upon. This is not bad—it is necessary. But, it is bad not to recognize that the piece doesn't function in isolation—only as a part of the whole.

The authors of this publication have recognized this phenomenon in this publication; that reading and writing are flip sides of the same coin—that there is a kind of whole, parts of which serve to complement and reinforce each other. With the current emphasis on communication skills it is very important that every technique and strategy be utilized in enhancing them. Careful and thoughtful attention to the concepts and examples in this monograph will not only offer insights into the teaching-learning process in this area, but should also serve as the springboard for the teacher branch out into his or her own imaginative teaching activities. If either of these happen, particularly the latter, the monograph will have served its purpose well.

Charles H. Koelling
Associate Dean
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